

THE BEST EVER:  
PREP HOCKEY

# Pulling rink: Our top picks with pucks

*Fourth in a Sunday series detailing the best of high school sports in the metro area's history*

Dust off those memory banks again because, for the fourth consecutive week, The Courier is searching for the best we've seen.

This time, we delved into the archives for the best prep hockey player to come out of the Cedar Valley.

Through extensive research, numerous names appeared and there were several strong candidates.

Inevitably, there will be names missed, but we feel we've got a pretty good short list.



Without question, the heyday of high school hockey in the metro area came in late 1970s and early 1980s. Waterloo Columbus and the Waterloo Warriors officially began playing in 1975, and the two programs quickly became the powerhouses in Iowa prep hockey circles.

From 1977 to 1983, the two teams (Columbus five times, the Warriors twice) won seven consecutive Iowa High School Hockey League regular-season titles.

Two names immediately came to the forefront when examining the best players — Jeff Lamb and Mark Lanigan.

“Both of those guys were fantastic hockey players who, after leaving Waterloo, went on to have great collegiate careers,” said former Waterloo Warriors and Columbus head coach Mike Brown.

Lamb came along first, playing one season each with Columbus and the Warriors. He went onto the University of Denver, where he had 47 goals and 82 assists between 1983

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Lamb was then drafted by the Pittsburgh Penguins in the 1986 NHL supplemental draft. He eventually played for the Phoenix Roadrunners of the IHL and the Maine Mariners of the AHL for two seasons.

Lanigan was described as an imposing defenseman for Columbus. His career took him to Northern Michigan from 1984 to 1988, and he was later drafted by the St. Louis Blues.

Other standouts included Scott Dolan, Doug Dietz and Jim Tyler.

Dolan, a Columbus grad, played two seasons with the Waterloo Black Hawks but was forced to give up the sport because of knee injuries.

Dietz, a Warrior, played on a pair of national championship teams at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Tyler, a West grad, played at Bemidji State.

“Those guys were the first players who saw the benefits of playing high school hockey in Waterloo,” said Brown. “They were real good hockey players. Scott was a great athlete who just had a bad knee.”

The next elite name to come along was Brian Cook, who earned MVP honors at the state tournament in both 1983 and 1985.

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## NELSON

Picking the best with pucks one tough task

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“I’m kind of biased, because he grew up across the street from my house, but Brian was a heck of a player for the Warriors. He was pretty crazy about hockey from a young age,” said Brown.

Cook, after starring for the Warriors, went on to play at St. Cloud State.

Other names to pop up were Rob Brown and Scott Boice, the 1981 state tourney MVP.

“Rob was physically the best hockey player to come out of here. It just didn’t work out for him,” noted Brown. “He had physical size nobody has had before or since.”

Danny Bloom was another name to surface. After his days were done with the Warriors, he played prep school hockey at Hotchkiss Prep before playing four years at Princeton.

While he never had the opportunity to play high school hockey in Waterloo, Walt Kyle carries the biggest name value of any former Cedar Valley hockey player. The current head coach at Northern Michigan and active coach with USA Hockey, Kyle was a 15th-round draft choice by the Vancouver Blazers of the WHA in 1974, one year before high school hockey started in Waterloo.

“Walt was sort of a different breed of cat. He came up through the rec leagues,” said Brown. “He had a lot of success in the USHL (United States Hockey League) before he went on to Boston College.”

Kyle played one season with the Waterloo Black Hawks and one with the Austin Mavericks of the USHL before landing at BC. However, he played just one season for the Eagles before transferring to Northern Michigan.

One of his claims to fame is he was the first player in history to score a goal in NCAA tournament play for two differ-

ent teams.

In his two seasons at Northern Michigan, he registered 90 points, including 31 goals.

Walt’s brother, John, followed him to Northern Michigan where he played defense.

In the last decade, Bryce Anderson is easily the most recognizable former Waterloo Warrior.

After graduating from East High, Anderson played in the North American Hockey League before finally landing with the Rochester Mustangs and Des Moines Buccaneers in the USHL.

The 2000 Iowa High School Hockey League state tournament most valuable player eventually signed on to play at Ohio State, where he finished his playing career this season.

Anderson played minor league hockey in the East Coast Hockey League this past spring.

“Everybody kept telling Bryce he wasn’t good enough to play,” said Brown. “But what a great kid, with great determination. He always believed in what he was doing.”

There were other players from the early days who enjoyed great prep careers — individuals such as Kevin Londau, Tim Fisher, Greg Davis (who played at Ferris State) and Eric Peterson (who played at Bethel College).

But picking the best is kind of like the Waterloo Black Hawks trying to decide who to pick first in the USHL draft. Do you go with a defenseman? A forward? Or a goalie?

If you go defense, it’s probably Lanigan, while in goal, Peterson and Davis most likely stand out. But offensively, it would be a much tougher decision.

It would be hard to go wrong with either Cook, Lamb, Tyler, Dolan or Kyle.

But if you have to pick just one, Kyle gets the nod because he did captain two Frozen Four teams at Northern Michigan.

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